

# The Briefing



*Thank you for printing this page. Do come back to [matthiasmedia.com/briefing](http://matthiasmedia.com/briefing) again, as we are constantly adding new and challenging Christian articles. Please note that, to save you paper and ink, we have stopped navigation, comments and other unnecessary elements from printing.*

## Preaching hell from the Bible

Gordon Cheng (<http://matthiasmedia.com/briefing/authors/gordon-cheng/>) | 9 September, 2010

Hell is a sphere of separation and deprivation, of pain and punishment, of darkness and destruction, and of disintegration and perishing. The vocabulary of the New Testament includes: darkness outside, weeping and grinding of teeth, destruction of body and soul, eternal fire, fire of hell, condemned to hell, forfeiting eternal life, the wrath of God, everlasting destruction away from the presence of the Lord, perishing, separation, blackest darkness. *Sinclair Ferguson*, 9Marks e-journal (<http://www.9marks.org/ejournal/what-then-shall-we-preach-hell>)

The whole current issue (<http://www.9marks.org/ejournal/hell-remembering-awful-reality>) of 9Marks e-journal is devoted to the subject of hell, and is well worth a closer look. Ferguson's article gives a clear, well-referenced summary of the Bible's descriptions of what hell is and what it is like. Plenty of sound advice to the preacher, too, on the importance of nerving ourselves for the awful task of speaking plainly about coming judgement. Teaching on hell is hard teaching but, like diamond, the hardness is an essential part of its brightness.

In the same e-journal, Andrew Naselli (<http://www.9marks.org/ejournal/hellfire-and-brimstone-interpreting-new-testaments-descriptions-hell>) has some useful things to say about whether we should feel comfort or dread when confronted by 'metaphorical' language of fire and brimstone. Kevin deYoung talks about something worse than death (<http://www.9marks.org/ejournal/theres-something-worse-death>), and has a thought-provoking comparison between hell and ballast on a boat. Greg Gilbert (<http://www.9marks.org/ejournal/why-hell-integral-gospel>) tells why hell is integral to the gospel. James Hamilton (<http://www.9marks.org/ejournal/why-hell-integral-gospel>) does a wonderful job of explaining briefly how hell glorifies God. Lots of other great stuff too, like Mark Dever's

(<http://www.9marks.org/ejournal/pastoral-fearmongering-manipulation-and-hell>) satirical roasting of preachers who think that teaching hell is manipulative.

The articles are short and sharp. Together they represent not so much a hellology, as a series of booster injections given by reliable theological doctors to vaccinate a sluggish preacher against apathy, and against the ever-present danger of drifting in his own faith. Nice, at a time when too many theologians are anaesthetizing too many Bible readers with too many clever speculations.

I found the 9Marks articles personally invigorating, if frightening. Two years ago I did [my own e-series](http://ingmarhingwah.blogspot.com/2008/05/fired-up-about-hell_12.html) ([http://ingmarhingwah.blogspot.com/2008/05/fired-up-about-hell\\_12.html](http://ingmarhingwah.blogspot.com/2008/05/fired-up-about-hell_12.html)) on the subject. Two years on, I'm more rather than less convinced of the importance of preaching hell well, faithfully, explicitly, and regularly enough that we and our congregations remember to fear it, and to fear the God who can put us there. Thank God that 9Marks have helped us here. Let's pray that more people will scorn the fear of public reaction to hell, out of a right fear of the God who holds our preaching and teaching to account.

By the way, if you are a reader who fears hell, yet doesn't know how to escape it, then know that in Jesus' death and resurrection, all power of hell has been defeated. Trust him!

But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.

That's [Romans 5: 8-9](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Romans%205.8-9) (<https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Romans%205.8-9>). The diamond hardness of fear of God's wrath, seen through the cross of Christ, preserves for us the diamond brightness of perfect hope—if we will only trust ourselves to his love.

Comments are closed.